

**Subject: *Thine is the Kingdom***

**Scripture: *Matthew 6:13***

As we use the Lord's Prayer as our model, it does some good things for us. Praying this way relieves stress and it improves our focus. We find ourselves getting things out of focus. What seems to be so important isn't really all that important. The Lord's Prayer is the dial that sharpens our focus. We need to see things as they really are, not as we want them to be. We don't need "rose-colored glasses." We need corrective lenses so we can see what's really important in life.

The Lord's Prayer begins with a reference to God's kingdom and it ends with a reference to His kingdom. Our Father is a King. We have the sympathy of a Father, and we have the sovereignty of a King. When we pray, we don't need to worry. How could we ever doubt God's love or His ability?

The greatest hindrance to prayer is not a lack of knowledge or a lack of concern, but a lack of faith. We are not willing to trust God to do what only He can do. It has been said, "Prayer can do anything God can do, and God can do anything."

### **1. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God**

You could say that the kingdom of God was more important to Christ than any other subject. John the Baptist paved the way for Jesus by preaching the kingdom, ***Matthew 3:2*** *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Then Jesus began His ministry preaching the same message, ***Matthew 4:17*** *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* He continued with the same message. ***Luke 4:43*** *And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.* What is the difference between "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of Heaven?" Nothing. The Gospel of Matthew uses the term "kingdom of Heaven" instead of "kingdom of God," because of the Jewish reverence for the name of God. Jesus told His disciples to go and preach the same message, ***Matthew 10:7*** *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Even after His resurrection during the forty days of ministry before His ascension, Jesus talked to His disciples about the kingdom. ***Acts 1:3*** *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

### **2. Jesus explained the Kingdom of God**

- A. He explained the importance of the kingdom – In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to the kingdom many times. ***Matthew 5:3*** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* ***Matthew 5:20*** *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* ***Matthew 6:33*** *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* The Jewish sages (rabbis) suggested that God began His holy Word to remind us of our responsibility to focus on His kingdom. The first Hebrew letter in the Bible is the letter "beth" (equivalent to our letter B). It is closed on three sides, and according to the Jewish sages our main focus must not be what is behind us (worrying about the past), or what is above us (speculating about what heaven is like), or what is below us (what is the nature of hell), but our focus must be on what lies before us, that is, our present duty. In other words, the kingdom of God has to do with accepting Christ as God's Son and the Messiah, and then committing ourselves to doing His will.

- B. He explained the identity (nature) of the kingdom – In many of His parables, Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” When He was tempted by Satan, He understood that God’s kingdom is far different from the kingdoms of man. (see **Matt. 4:8-10**. Satan tempted Jesus with three things. He offered Him instant food, instant fame, and instant fortune. But Jesus understood the nature of God’s kingdom and the Father’s perfect plan. He knew that the cross must come before the crown. When Jesus stood trial before Pilate, He explained the nature of the kingdom. **John 18:36** *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

### **3. Jesus demonstrated the Kingdom of God**

Through His acts of healing, compassion, and mercy, He demonstrated that the kingdom of God affects people’s lives in a dramatic way. **Luke 11:17-20**<sup>17</sup> *But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.*<sup>18</sup> *If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.*<sup>19</sup> *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.*<sup>20</sup> *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

The kingdom of God is both present and future. It is at the same time “already” and “not yet.” It is “here and now,” and it is “even more to come.” There is a sense in which God’s kingdom is not present, but the consummation is yet to come.

When we think of the kingdom of God, we should not think in terms of some place, but of SOME ONE. The kingdom of God is not a political empire or geographical location (like the United Kingdom), but it is God’s presence and power actively involved in people’s lives. It is not a place, but a power and a presence—the power and presence of God Himself.

### **4. Jesus opened the Kingdom of God**

A Christian is one who has been “delivered from the power of darkness and has been translated into the kingdom of God’s own dear Son” (**Col. 1:13**). He opens the kingdom to all who will enter on His terms. We must repent of our sins and trust in Him. Jesus opened the kingdom to the dying thief on these terms. **Luke 23:42-43**<sup>42</sup> *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*<sup>43</sup> *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Jesus encouraged us that all may enter the kingdom, but He also warned us that all will not be in the kingdom. **Matthew 7:21-23**<sup>21</sup> *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*<sup>22</sup> *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*<sup>23</sup> *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* The One who opens the door for all who are saved is the same One who shuts it behind those who are lost. How sad to think that possibly some who are in church will not be in the kingdom. Being in the church family is no guarantee of being in God’s family and His kingdom.

There was a sad, but true story in Friday’s Herald Courier about a dog that saved the lives of its owners when a house fire broke out, but that same dog went back into the house and was killed. Sad, isn’t it? But there is something even more tragic—to think that it is possible for some people to warn people about hell and yet they are eternally lost. We are taught to pray, “Thine is the kingdom.” Can you also say that because of His grace, the kingdom is now MINE?